UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/S-3/NGO/3
25 May 1994

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Third special session
24-25 May 1994
Agenda item 3

LETTER DATED 9 MAY 1994 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CANADA TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA ADDRESSED TO THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Written statement submitted by Centre Europe-Tiers Monde, a non-governmental organization on the roster

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[25 May 1994]

1. The ingredients of the current genocide in Rwanda have been in place for a long time: the same force is already guilty of several other murderous campaigns, which can now only be described as "dress rehearsals".

2. It is not only misleading, but totally hypocritical to present the conflict as rivalry between two camps, the party in power and the RPF, or as a tribal conflict between two hostile ethnic groups, the Hutu and the Tutsi.

3. Political responsibility for these massacres must be unequivocally assigned. Within Rwanda, it lies exclusively with the clan, or part of the clan, of the deceased President, a clique which no doubt feared the loss of part of its prerogatives and privileges following the Arusha agreements. 1/ The killings were planned cold-bloodedly. They manifestly constitute an act of genocide, precisely targeted by the authorities, not particularly against the Tutsi as such, but against the democratic opposition forces as a whole, regardless of their ethnic identity.

4. Since the massacres began, numerous witnesses have confirmed the facts and put the blame on the authorities in power.

5. However, a heavy burden of responsibility lies with elements outside Rwanda, whom we must not be afraid to name. The international community has washed its hands of the affair, although the authorities in some countries, and the arms dealers whom they frequently represent, are directly responsible for the unfolding of this tragedy. First and foremost, unfortunately, there is France, which has consistently supported Rwanda's dictatorial Government and trained and supplied its army, particularly the Presidential Guard, which appears to have played a key role. Alongside France, at least for historical reasons, stands Belgium.

6. Throughout this affair, the United Nations has hardly played a distinguished role either. It has simply stood on the sidelines, so much so that a number of members of the United Nations peace-keeping forces who were recalled to their countries came back revolted after seeing innocent victims having their throats cut before their eyes, without being authorized to intervene. Moreover, as the United States was manifestly dragging its feet, the Security Council took several weeks to meet and then only adopted half measures that will probably have no practical consequences.

7. When it came into being, the United Nations gave rise throughout the world to immense hopes of peace. It enjoyed enormous standing, although over the years its paralysis by the great Powers' use of the veto gradually tarnished its image. However, and even in spite of some recent achievements by United Nations diplomacy, which should by no means be minimized, the loss of public confidence in the United Nations has gradually turned into mistrust and finally into widespread discredit: the policy of dual standards, the parody of international law used as a pretext for the ignominious war in the Gulf - another programmed massacre, although on this occasion elsewhere than in the tropics - the Somali fiasco, the condoning of the policy of ethnic cleansing by fascist forces in the former Yugoslavia, have led to any United Nations intervention being suspect while at the same time any non-intervention is perceived as cowardice, contempt

---

1/ The most commonly accepted hypothesis is that some members of this clan themselves masterminded the assassination of President Habyarimana to prevent these agreements from being implemented.

and failure to assist populations in danger. This is the price to pay for the hope which the peoples of the world placed in the United Nations.

8. The touchstone for action by the United Nations should always be the interest of peoples, of the vast majority of our planet's inhabitants, human rights and not the interest of the major Powers, multinational corporations or arms dealers. It is high time for the United Nations to become, or once again become, the United Peoples' Organization, and not the United States Organization, with everything the pun implies.

9. What is to be done? We endorse the proposals made, and in particular the proposal to appoint a special rapporteur and to send observers. However, we would like to add two points:

(i) There is an urgent need for effective measures to prevent any more weapons being supplied to Rwanda, in particular to the army of the Rwandese Government, as its essential role is apparently to protect the hordes of murderers organized as militias. All the States present here should undertake to ensure that not a single additional cartridge reaches these murderers and to act with all necessary diligence to make this necessity a reality.

(ii) It is also imperative for all necessary measures to be taken to ensure that the perpetrators of these crimes, this genocide, these crimes against humanity, are identified and tried, in accordance with due process, but without faltering under international supervision. Whoever assumes power in Rwanda in the future, they must ensure that the desire for vengeance does not prevail over the sense of justice. These crimes must at all costs not go unpunished, as both impunity and the blind desire for vengeance and reprisals are incapable of appeasing hatred and bringing about the national reconciliation that Rwanda so badly needs.